

CAMBRIA IRON COMPANY, FOUNDRY  
(Bethlehem Steel Company, Foundry)  
Cambria Iron Works  
Lower Works  
Johnstown  
Cambria County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-109-E

HAER  
PA  
11-5070  
135E-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

CAMBRIA IRON COMPANY, FOUNDRY  
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Location: Lower Works, Johnstown, Cambria  
County, Pennsylvania

Quad: Johnstown, Pennsylvania

UTM: 17 E.676370 N.4467000

Date of Construction: ca. 1865

Fabricator: unknown

Present Owner: Bethlehem Steel Corporation

Present Use: Foundry

Significance: The iron foundry consists of a large two-story structure with ornate brick walls and a mansard slate-covered roof. Cambria Iron Company operated the foundry not as a commercial enterprise, but rather to service the iron works. Iron castings for the company's machine parts as well as ornamental ironwork for buildings were made in the foundry.

Historian: Gray Fitzsimons, ed.

Project Information:

The results of the study of Cambria County were published in 1990: Fitzsimons, Gray, editor, Blair County and Cambria County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (Washington, D.C.: America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP) and HABS/HAER, National Park Service). The contents of the publication were transmitted to the Library of Congress as individual reports. Research notes, field photos and copies of historic photos collected during the project were transmitted to the AIHP Collection, Special Collections, Stapleton Library, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705.

## HISTORY

Soon after the formation of the Cambria Iron Works, ironmasters George S. King and Dr. Peter Shoenberger oversaw the construction of four, coke-fired blast furnaces, a rolling mill, a machine shop, and a foundry. Financial difficulties hampered the completion of the rolling mill until 1854, when Wood, Morrell & Co. of Philadelphia provided additional capital to carry forward the enterprise. Between 1855 and 1862, Wood, Morrell & Co. leased the iron works and inaugurated the Conemaugh Valley's first large-scale production of iron rail. Over the next three years a number of new buildings were erected including an octagonally-shaped blacksmith shop (1864) and an iron foundry (1865). Cambria Iron Company operated the foundry not as a commercial enterprise, but rather to service the iron works. Iron castings for the company's machine parts as well as ornamental ironwork for buildings were made in the foundry.

Located behind the blacksmith shop and the machine shop, the two-story iron foundry measured 148' x 73' with a mansard slate-covered roof. Common-bond red-brick walls, round-arched window openings with decorative brick corbeling, and a stone foundation contributed aesthetically to the building. The original mansard roof has been replaced by a sloping corrugated metal roof resting on steel bar joists. A small, one-story brick addition was erected about 1890 along the west facade.

The 1870s witnessed considerable expansion at Cambria Iron, and the existing iron foundry was soon in need of enlargement. In 1880 Cambria Iron designed a large, two-and-one-half-story addition to the north. The wing measured 160' x 66', and incorporated a stone foundation, brick pilasters, common-bond brick walls, and wrought-iron, pin-connected Pratt roof trusses. The addition also included gable-roof monitors, wrought-iron columns, and flat-arched door and window openings, most of which have been covered with translucent fiberglass. A three-story sand conveyor, covered with corrugated metal and located along the northwestern facade of the wing was built in the 1960s. The interior of the Iron Foundry and Foundry Wing has been gutted, and only an electrically powered overhead crane in the 1881 addition remains in place. No other historic equipment remains in the foundry.

Along with this addition, a new cupola was installed in the 1865 foundry. As late as the 1930s much of the 1870s equipment was still in use. The Bethlehem Steel Company, after acquiring Cambria Iron in 1923, continued to use the foundry until about 1983. Since then, Bethlehem Steel has contracted with outside foundries for all of its iron castings for the Johnstown plants.

SOURCES

Cambria Iron Company. "Stone Base Course of Wall, New Foundry Building; June 15, 1880," original drawing in possession of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Engineering Division, Johnstown.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Rafter for Wing to Foundry Building, Cambria Iron Works; June 2 1880," original drawing in possession of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Engineering Division, Johnstown.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Wing to Foundry Building, Cambria Iron Works; May 18, 1880," original drawing in possession of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Engineering Division, Johnstown.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Oval Cupola for Addition to Foundry Building, Cambria Iron Works; May 18, 1880," original drawing in possession of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Engineering Division, Johnstown.

"Cambria Foundry, Historical Data," unpublished notes on the Foundry, no author, n.d., available in the Library of the Johnstown Flood Museum, Box: Steel Industry Scrapbook.

Galasso, Ralph. Pattern-Maker, Bethlehem Steel Corp.: Johnstown Plant Lower Works Division. Interviewed February 1987.

M'Cormick, S.B. "A Sketch of Johnstown and Suburbs; and the Cambria Iron Works." (Pittsburgh: Barr and Myers, n.d. [ca. 1867]) pp 11-15.

Sanborn Map Company. Johnstown, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1891 and 1911.